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ABSTRACT

This document evaluates the 1989 and 1990 Reading Improvement Program, which aimed to enhance and support 330 local schools in the implementation of Chicago (Illinois) Public Schools' goals for reading and language arts in kindergarten through grade 6. The program focused on improving instruction and reading achievement. Program features included reading resource teachers, bilingual classroom teachers, reduced class size, after-school tutoring, staff development, parent involvement, attendance incentive, and enrichment reading. The evaluation used student pretest and posttest data, observations, and eight behavioral outcomes to assess the program's success. With the exception of seventh and eighth grade tutors in an after-school component, achievement goals were not met. The reading resource teachers did not spend the expected time on individual instruction but rather focused on group instruction and on coordinating materials and students. Despite overcrowding and time constraints, many children did receive attention from bilingual classroom teachers. Teachers did not use the reduced class size concept extensively. Many benefits from the after-school tutoring program were reported. Extensive staff development occurred at most sites. Funds to develop parent involvement plans yielded a wide diversity of activities. Attendance improvement efforts had mixed results. The recreational and enrichment reading component produced positive results. Statistical data are provided in 29 tables. (JB)

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REPORT

RESEARCH, EVALUATION & PLANNING

ED342865

ILLINOIS INITIATIVES FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM

EVALUATION OF THE 1989 AND 1990 READING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



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General Superintendent of Schools

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ILLINOIS INITIATIVES FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM

**EVALUATION OF THE 1989 AND 1990
READING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning

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CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 1991

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PROGRAM FACTS

Title:	1989 and 1990 Reading Improvement Program
Program Purpose:	Enhance and support local schools in the implementation of Chicago Public Schools' goals and objectives for reading and language arts which are correlated to the State Goals for Learning. Develop strategies and procedures to impact on instruction and improve reading achievement.
Program Features:	Direct Instructional Components: Reading Resource Teachers, Bilingual Classroom Teachers, Reduced Class Size, After-School Tutoring. Indirect Instructional Components: Staff Development, Parent Involvement, Attendance Incentive Plan, Recreational/Enrichment Reading.
Grade Levels Served:	Kindergarten through Grade 6
Eligibility Requirements:	Students that demonstrate one or more years below grade level in reading achievement or limited-English-proficient students who need to improve their English reading ability.
Staffing:	136 (1989-90) Reading Resource Teachers 65 (1989-90) Reduced Class Size Teachers 36 (1989-90) Bilingual Classroom Teachers 36 (1989-90) Paraprofessionals 1,166 (1989) After-School Teachers 1,168 (1990) After-School Teachers 32 (1989) After-School Lead Teachers 25 (1990) After-School Lead Teachers
Location:	333 (1989) and 330 (1990) Elementary schools with instructional components
Funding Source:	Illinois Initiatives for Educational Reform
Funding Level:	1988-89 - \$13,320,771.00 1989-90 - \$13,757,713.50
First Year of Funding:	1986
Evaluation Period:	1988-89 and 1989-90 School Years

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The 1989 and 1990 Reading Improvement Program (RIP), funded by the Illinois Initiatives for Educational Reform, is conducted in the Chicago Public Schools each year between September and June. The program serves students in kindergarten through grade six. The goals of the program, are to improve student achievement in reading comprehension, to accelerate their rate of learning and to maximize students' academic potential.

To accomplish its goals, the program provides direct instruction to students by teachers and paraprofessionals through four components: reading resource teachers, bilingual classroom teachers and assistants, teachers to reduce class size, and after-school tutoring. Student achievement in reading is indirectly influenced by program components that offer staff development, parent involvement, recreational and enrichment reading, and local school plans to increase student attendance, and parent involvement.

Results of the 1989 and the 1990 Reading Improvement Program follow. In 1989, 15,730 student participants were identified; pre- and posttest results were available for 12,304 students. In 1990, 12,966 student participants were identified; pre- and posttest results were available for 8,879 students.

Eight behavioral outcomes assess the extent to which the program attained its goals. Descriptions of each component's methodology is reflected in separate analyses.

Achievement Results

The citywide testing program, using the *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills*, provides the pre-post measures of gains in reading. Multiple conversions of the 1989 test data, based on 1978 norms, were required to determine gains made using the 1990 test data, based on 1988 norms. Scores reported for the 1990 program indicate proportionally smaller gains made in the lower grades and somewhat higher gains made in the upper grades. Test results for the 1990 program may be a function of the statistical equating processes and may not be reflective of typical student performance.

In 1989, the evaluation objective called for 70 percent of the students and tutors to improve their normal curve equivalent scores (NCEs) by two or more units. Between 45.2 percent and 52.4 percent of the students gained two or more NCEs; the 70 percent objective was not met. In 1990, the evaluation objective called for 60 percent of the students and tutors to gain two or more NCEs. Between 52.4 percent and 74.0 percent of the students gained two or more NCEs. With the exception of the seventh and eighth grade tutors in the After-School Tutoring component, the objective was not met.

Participants during the 1990 school year had an average pretest NCE of 26, comparable to the 13th percentile; and an average posttest NCE of 29, comparable to the 16th percentile. This places the average participant in the Reading Improvement Program in the bottom quartile nationally. Modest gains in accelerating students' rate of learning have fluctuated by component, grade, and school since the program began in 1986. It is important to note that student selection for the program is based on local needs and participants in the program are not the same from year to year.

Program Components

Reading Resource Teacher

During both the 1989 and 1990 school years, teacher-directed, whole-class group instruction was most frequently observed. It was anticipated that resource staff would provide more individualized reading lessons than were observed. Between eight and eleven students were present, on average, and the predominant instructional delivery included discussion and question-answer sessions.

Questionnaire responses from resource staff and regular classroom teachers in their schools indicated that a majority of the reading resource teachers' time was spent identifying and disseminating instructional materials, coordinating staff training and recommending intervention reading strategies, and organizing and grouping students. Comments from classroom teachers revealed that the assistance given them by resource teachers helped them to improve their teaching of reading techniques. Training occurred at grade level meetings, at school faculty meetings, or during informal conversations and classroom demonstrations. Some resource staff merely copied materials distributed at citywide meetings to share and did not provide local teacher training.

Bilingual Classroom Teacher

Bilingual-endorsed classroom teachers and paraprofessionals work with limited-English-proficient (LEP) students using instructional materials designed to both assess student needs and remediate their reading deficiencies. Instruction is provided predominantly to instructional Category A and B students; therefore, teachers follow the guidelines for delivery of native language reading skills appropriate to reading through English as a Second Language (ESL). Materials are used or developed that support the general program of instruction for non-English-speaking students.

A majority of bilingual classrooms were observed in both school years. Teaching strategies, student behavior, lesson content and general classroom activities and learning environments were documented. Because of overcrowded conditions in most bilingual schools, teachers sometimes worked in makeshift space and hallways. Paraprofessionals often worked directly in regular bilingual classrooms under the supervision of the homeroom teacher.

On average, nine or ten students were observed receiving reading and language arts instruction, predominantly in their native language; portions of the whole-class group lessons were augmented in English. Word recognition and pronunciation of English and native language vocabulary were observed more frequently than comprehensive reading for meaning.

Bilingual specialists spent a large portion of their time coordinating the bilingual program in their schools and performing other administrative tasks. They also held parent meetings to inform parents of the school's reading program and how parents could help their children at home.

Regular classroom teachers reported that students who received instruction from the bilingual reading specialist showed the most improvement in reading for fun, in their improved attitude toward schoolwork, and in building their self-esteem. In those schools where the bilingual reading specialist was able to find time to provide local staff training, regular teachers reported the information and assistance helped them to improve their reading instruction. Most of the meetings were informal, and few demonstrations in the classroom were provided. In some schools, the bilingual specialist did not conduct local inservice training or provide student instruction as proposed in the program design.

Reduced Class Size

Each year one-third of the teachers in this component are new to the reduced class size concept. Orientation and staff training for the teachers in this component of the Reading Improvement Program is provided locally. Almost three-fourths of the teachers reported that principals or assistant principals provided some orientation training help staff to optimize the teaching-learning possibilities in the smaller group setting. No training, however, was provided for 27 percent of the reduced class size teachers in 1989 nor for 30 percent of the staff in 1990.

In general, a new reduced division was formed by selecting students from several classrooms or by dividing one class division in half. A majority of reduced size classrooms were visited in both school years. Observations found multiple instruction levels in one room with an average of 14 to 18 students present. There were instances where class size ran between 23 and 27 students.

Teacher-directed, whole-class group reading and related language arts lessons were most frequently observed. While teachers reported that small class size provided the opportunity to individualize instruction in small, flexible groupings of students, observations found that they were seldom used. As in past years, teachers have not capitalized on creative instruction delivery models that might accelerate students' rate of learning. Instead, lesson presentations do not differ substantially from a regular sized classroom.

The observed and reported benefits of this component rest in the ease of maintaining class discipline, in promoting students' self-esteem, in building positive attitudes towards school, and in improving student attendance.

After-School Tutoring

Tutoring activities began in October or November and continued through April. Diagnostic pretests were provided to assist teachers in grouping students and selecting appropriate level reading materials. Over 60 percent of the teachers, in both 1989 and 1990, reported serving two or more instructional levels in one room. This was confirmed during on-site visits.

Training for teachers in the After-School component was provided locally by reading resource teachers or administrative staff. In schools with five or more classes, lead teachers were assigned and provided orientation training. A sample of one-third of the schools were visited each school year.

Whole-group instruction was observed in a majority of classroom visits. The average number of students per classroom was ten, with enrollment as high as 16 in 1989 and 15 in 1990. Where schools were able to recruit tutors, an average of one tutor per room was observed. The presence of seventh and eighth grade tutors was infrequent. Seatwork, question-and-answer sessions, and round-robin oral reading were the most frequently observed instructional delivery formats. During silent seatwork, teachers actively monitored student progress and assisted when needed.

During 1989, extensive use of commercial workbooks and dittoes was evident, in the 1990 program, content area texts and audiovisual materials (computers, tapes, filmstrips) were observed more frequently. Use of the basal reading series was nonexistent during the 1990 classroom observations.

Benefits from After-School Tutoring, widely reported by teachers, included improved progress in reading and, equally important, an increased enthusiasm to read for fun. Teachers found the small-group setting encouraged greater student participation and enabled students to gain confidence in themselves and in their reading abilities.

Staff Development

Monthly staff development workshops, organized by the Bureau of Language Arts, provided continuous support for reading resource specialists, bilingual reading specialists and paraprofessionals. This training enabled nonquota staff to bring the most current research information in the areas of reading and language arts back to their schools. Workshop presenters included authors, university professors, research experts, and other specialists in the field of reading and language arts. Reading Improvement staff learned how to model training techniques and to provide classroom demonstrations. Teachers were given materials they could use in training their own local staff. New trade books and basal materials were available for preview. The monthly half-day meetings covered an array of reading and language arts topics, and included specific presentations for teachers of bilingual students.

Attendance at these meetings for nonquota staff provides the ongoing support that enables program teachers to enhance their own skills in teaching reading as well as gain confidence in their ability to network these skills at their local schools. Resource staff were not in attendance at all scheduled meetings in either school year. In some instances, teachers were involved in critical school events that precluded their attending the training sessions. In other instances, illness or personal business were reasons for nonattendance.

In those schools where reading specialists attended monthly training on a regular basis and were permitted to disseminate the information they learned, the philosophy of the staff development workshops reaped its greatest benefits. Surveyed local staff in both years responded favorably to the new reading strategies they learned from their resource specialists.

According to regular and program teachers, sharing occurred at formal staff meetings or at grade level meetings. Most sharing was casual and informal. Some resource staff provided classroom demonstrations. It was also reported that some resource specialist did not provide any inservice training locally because they were engaged in teaching groups of students all day or they were required to perform administrative and clerical tasks.

Parent Involvement

Each school receiving state initiative funds was encouraged to develop a parent involvement plan. In addition to regularly scheduled report card pickup and open-house activities, program staff and administrators could plan training meetings for parents to help them assist their children at home and acquaint them with the school's reading program. Book fairs, assemblies and learning exchanges were also suggested.

Surveyed parents and school staff, during both program years, indicated that concerted efforts had been made to develop parent awareness and involvement. The results of these efforts yielded a wide diversity of parent programming and activities. Among the many events that parents and staff shared were the following: a checkout library for parents, teacher-student-parent reading contracts, parent centers, and a school program called "Becoming a Family of Readers."

Some schools organized General Education Diploma (GED) programs, others provided regular newsletters and flyers. One school organized tutoring and reading marathons, and others held regular parent training sessions. These and many other events were in addition to regular PTA meetings. Principals and parents saw greater parent awareness and involvement during the two school years than did regular classroom teaching staff.

It is apparent from survey results that a gap exists between parents' and staffs' perceptions of what constitutes involvement. Based on information collected during the early years of the Reading Improvement Program and current evaluation data, there has been a steady increase in the aggressive activities that schools have initiated for parents and the improved awareness and involvement that parents report.

Attendance

Each school was urged to develop an incentive plan to encourage perfect student attendance. Not only did schools include the improvement of school attendance in their Action Plans, they also established awards assemblies, certificates, recognition bulletin boards, monthly movies and field trips.

During 1990, 40 percent of the schools improved their attendance over the previous year, 6 percent maintained their rate over the previous year, and 54 percent had a decrease in their average daily attendance. The average daily attendance of the 330 schools participating in the Reading Improvement Program ranged from 81.2 percent to 96.2 percent in 1990.

Recreational and Enrichment Reading

Funds for recreational and enrichment reading materials have been made available to each elementary school serving students in kindergarten through grade six since 1986. By adding literature, trade books, and filmstrips or tapes of a literary nature to room libraries or to the school library, students have greater access to new and exciting books. Through the 1989 and 1990 school years, resource specialists played a major role in identifying and ordering recreational reading materials for staff in their buildings.

Classroom teachers reported selecting a wide array of reading materials to update their room library centers. They also reported increasing the frequency of independent, enjoyable reading time throughout the year. The funds from the state program have had a positive and major impact on students' increased interest in reading for pleasure. Parents also indicated that their children were reading more library books at home.

Recommendations

Since the Reading Improvement Program was implemented in the Chicago Public Schools in 1986, the percentage of students accelerating their rate of growth based on their past performance has fluctuated each year. From moderate to major academic improvement has been demonstrated each year at different schools, at different grade levels, and in different components of the program. Yet, each year, a percentage of students loses ground based on their previous years' performance. Evaluations have documented through the years a range of program implementation from the best to the worst, the appropriate and inappropriate use of staff selected to participate in one or more of the program components, and effective strategies that program staff have initiated. The evaluation report for the 1989 and 1990 school years is no exception.

Professional educators know there is no one best way that works. It is incumbent upon LSCs, school administrators, and teachers to continue to experiment with state initiative funds to find the best fit between teachers' teaching styles and students' learning styles. If the goals of the state initiative reform program are to have the most impact on students' accelerating their rate of learning, new avenues of instruction must be attempted.

The following recommendations are offered:

- As schools use their Reading Improvement Program funds, the LSCs, administrators, and staff collaboratively design a program that best serves the needs of their student population. This design should include selection of teachers best suited for the task, selection of students that will gain the most by the supplemental reading instruction, selection of materials that are stimulating, and a monitoring plan that regularly checks the progress of participating students.
- Reading resource and bilingual resource specialists who are in the best position and have received the most training, find the best vehicle in their schools to change reading comprehension instruction.
- Staff attending citywide training workshops use the information learned in a demonstrable and intense manner with the students they teach and with the staff they train in their schools.
- Program staff who instruct students during the day or in the extended-day component, provide for continuous communication with regular classroom teachers. Lesson plans and classroom activities should reflect the ongoing changes required to reach and to teach to their students' reading needs.

- Greater emphasis should be placed on ESL transitional instruction for Category B and C students.
- Staff orientation training should be a prerequisite to learning the goals and potential of the small-group instruction components and the tasks and responsibilities of the teachers delivering remedial reading instruction. Cooperative learning and hands-on models of instruction should be attempted.
- Staff development should continue for reading resource specialists and attempts should be made to provide current research-based reading information or training for those teachers providing direct instruction to students on a regular basis. The dissemination of good teaching practices must be supportive and continuous for those teachers directly involved with students.
- Reading Improvement Program (RIP) proposals must include specified funds to purchase motivational instruction materials in reading and recreational library materials.
- RIP proposals should include specific tasks for program staff, monitoring time lines, and outcomes that validate the goals of the program.
- Schools vigorously continue their efforts at improving student attendance and parent involvement.

INTRODUCTION

The Reading Improvement Program is funded by the Illinois Initiatives for Educational Reform. On July 18, 1985, Senate Bill 730, was signed into law. In the fall of 1986, the Chicago Public Schools implemented this program to improve the reading skills of students in kindergarten through grade six. The focus of the program is to develop strategies and procedures that impact on reading instruction to improve students' skills and abilities in reading comprehension.

Through annual proposals written by staff from the Bureau of Language Arts, the Reading Improvement Program again received state grants in 1989 and 1990, the fourth and fifth years of the program, respectively. The funds received from the state provide schools with additional resources to select staff and reading materials to improve the reading skills of selected students.

The diversity of the program's components enables schools to serve elementary students directly and indirectly. The direct instruction components include reading resource teachers, bilingual classroom teachers and paraprofessionals, teachers to reduce class size, and after-school tutoring. The indirect instructional components of the program include staff development, parent involvement, attendance incentive plan, and recreational/enrichment reading materials.

This two-year evaluation report documents program implementation and operation, classroom observations, achievement results, and school staff and parent perceptions of the program.

PROGRAM GOALS AND COMPONENTS

The proposed goals and corresponding components of the program are as follows:

- To improve reading instruction and strengthen the core reading program, reading resource teachers were designated for 136 schools
- To improve reading instruction for limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, bilingual classroom teachers and paraprofessionals were designated for 36 schools
- To improve reading achievement, accelerate student learning, and maximize student potential, an additional teacher was designated for 65 schools to reduce class size
- To increase instructional reading time, extended-day tutorial teachers were designated for 305 schools
- To develop and extend teachers' abilities to teach reading, eight citywide inservice training workshops were planned
- To foster greater parent participation, participating schools were encouraged to develop a parent involvement plan
- To increase student attendance, participating schools were encouraged to develop attendance incentive strategies
- To develop students who read independently and read for pleasure, funds were designated to elementary schools having kindergarten through grade six for room libraries.

EVALUATION COMPONENTS

The evaluation for the 1989 and the 1990 school years examines the extent to which students accelerated their rate of learning and made progress in reading. The intent of the evaluation is multifaceted. Provisions in the evaluation include ongoing formative information to facilitate optimal program implementation and management, data that document strengths and weaknesses of the program components, patterns that appear to have an impact on student progress in reading, and factors that may influence program results.

Design

Data collected and analyzed answer the following questions:

- Did at least 70 percent of the students and tutors in 1989 and 60 percent of the students and tutors in 1990 improve their normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores in reading comprehension by at least two NCE units from pre- to posttest?
- Did at least 95 percent of the reading resource and bilingual classroom teachers for LEP students attend all eight scheduled staff development workshops to improve their teaching of reading skills?
- Did at least 80 percent of the program staff and regular teaching staff verify that the staff development training they received improved their techniques and methods for teaching reading?
- Did at least 80 percent of the program staff exhibit teaching behaviors and job responsibilities consistent with the program design and philosophy?
- Did at least 75 percent of the students in 1989 and 50 percent of the students in 1990 who were assigned to bilingual instructional categories A, B, or C at the beginning of the school year advance to at least the next higher instructional category by the end of the school year?
- Did at least 75 percent of the LEP students receive progress ratings of "good" or better, in English and their native language, in comprehension and expression?
- Did at least 90 percent of the schools in the program develop an incentive program to encourage improved attendance?
- Did at least 75 percent of the parents of participating students become more actively involved in their children's schooling and reading progress?

Methods

Evaluators from the Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning observed classroom instruction in a representative sample of schools during the two-year evaluation period. A different sample of schools is selected each year for on-site visits, and questionnaire distribution to staff and parents of participating students.

Each year program enrollment forms are distributed to each school with direct instructional components to identify student participants and record achievement results. The *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)* is used to assess growth in reading.

Other evaluation strategies include attendance at inservice training sessions, informal interviews with school staff, and analyses of Chicago Public Schools' attendance and monitoring reports.

Evaluation Data Analyzed in 1989 and in 1990

1989	Data Source	1990
15730	-- Enrollment Forms	12,966
269	-- Classroom Observation Forms	273
98	-- Reading Resource Teacher Questionnaires	102
45	-- Reduced Class Size Teacher Questionnaires	39
353	-- AST Teacher Questionnaires	445
18	-- Bilingual Classroom Teacher Questionnaires	21
402	-- Regular Classroom Teacher Questionnaires	624
258	-- Principal Questionnaires	129
558	-- Parent Questionnaires	505
8	-- Inservice Records	8

OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS

Description

Reading comprehension results for each component for 1989 are reported in Table 1 and reading comprehension results for 1990 are reported in Table 2. The *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills* (ITBS), administered during spring 1988, served as the pretest and the spring 1989 ITBS served as the posttest to assess the 1989 program; spring 1989 ITBS scores served as the pretest and spring 1990 scores served as the posttest to assess the 1990 program.

Note: The new version of the ITBS given in April 1990, uses norms developed in 1988. This newly-normed test is more reflective of the performance of a representative national sample of today's students. To assess the Reading Improvement Program in 1989 based on 1978 norms and the 1990 program based on 1988 norms, statistical methods for equating test results were used. The multiple conversions used in the norming process makes comparison of the test results less valid. This should be taken into account as 1990 program results are reviewed. The increases in the percentage of students gaining two or more NCEs or making NCE gains may be a function of the statistical equating process used when converting the 1989 scores from the 1978 norms to the 1988 norms.

Table 1

1989 ITBS Reading Comprehension Results--Percentage Gaining Two or More NCE Units, Percentage Making NCE Gains, and Median Reading Grade-Equivalent Gains

Component	Students Reported Enrolled	N with Matched Pre-Posttests	Percent Gaining 2 or More NCE Units	Percent Making NCE Gains	Median G.E. Gains
RRT	1,739	1,249	52.4	55.3	1.0
LEP	1,260	84	45.2	46.4	0.8
RCS	1,564	1,350	47.1	49.6	1.0
AST:Students	10,724	9,256	50.1	52.8	1.0
AST:Tutors	370	351	48.1	54.4	1.3
Component					
Not Coded	73	14	50.0	64.3	0.9

Note: Components are as follows--

- RRT = Reading Resource Teacher
- LEP = Bilingual Teacher for Limited-English-Proficient Students
- RCS = Reduced Class Size
- AST = After-School Tutoring, **S**tudent and **T**utor

Table 2

**1990 ITBS Reading Comprehension Results Percentage
Gaining Two or More NCE Units, Percentage Making NCE Gains,
and Median Reading Grade-Equivalent Gains**

Component	Students Reported Enrolled	N with Matched Pre-Posttests	Percent Gaining 2 or More NCE Units	Percent Making NCE Gains	Median G.E. Gains
RRT	1,347	819	52.4	54.0	0.9
LEP	1,153	65	58.5	58.5	1.1
RCS	1,166	907	55.6	57.7	1.0
AST:Students	8,992	6,802	54.8	57.1	1.0
AST:Tutors	267	261	74.0	77.0	1.6
Component Not Coded	41	25	68.0	68.0	1.0

Discussion of Results

Pre- and posttest results were available for 12,304 out of 15,730 students reported enrolled during the 1989 school year program, and for 8,879 out of 12,966 students reported enrolled during the 1990 school year program. Scores were not available for all the students served in the Reading Improvement Program for the following reasons:

- Not all schools returned Program Enrollment Forms and participating students could not be identified.
- Matched pre- and posttest scores were unavailable for some students.
- Scores were not available for students who did not participate in the citywide testing program such as Category A or ESL I, Category B or ESL II, and some students in Special Education.
- When Program Enrollment Forms were improperly coded, test scores could not be found.

NCE scores are similar to percentile ranks in that they measure growth with respect to national norms, the midpoint for both being 50. An NCE gain of zero implies a normal rate of progress based on a student's past performance. If a student's performance is better than what is normally expected, NCE gains would be greater than zero. NCE gains for a group of students greater than zero illustrate that students made better than expected progress. We can be reasonably confident that the program being evaluated is having a distinct and positive impact on students' learning when students gain two or more NCEs.

In 1989, the evaluation objective called for 70 percent of the students and tutors to improve their normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores in reading comprehension by at least two NCE units from pre- to posttest. The objective was not met. In 1990, a newly normed version of the ITBS was used citywide and the objective called for 60 percent of the students and tutors to improve their NCE scores in reading comprehension by at least two NCE units from pre- to posttest. With the exception of the seventh and eighth grade tutors, the objective was not met.

Since the Reading Improvement Program (RIP) was implemented in the Chicago Public Schools in 1986, students served in the program have been those whose standardized test scores indicated a critical need for intervention strategies to help them accelerate their rate of learning. The students served during the 1989 and 1990 school years were no exceptions. In 1990, the average RIP student had a pretest NCE of 26, comparable to the 13th percentile, and a posttest NCE of 29 comparable to the 16th percentile. This puts the average student selected to participate in the Reading Improvement Program in the bottom quartile nationally.

Each year, from 1987 through 1990, the percentage of students accelerating their rate of growth based on their past performance fluctuates and in some instances modest improvement is demonstrated. Similarly, the percentage of students gaining two or more NCEs also reflects variations and moderate improvement. To illustrate this fact, Table 3 points out the percentage of students making NCE gains and the percentage of students improving their NCE scores by two or more units each year of the program between 1987 and 1990. It should be noted that the student population is not the same from year to year in the four direct instruction components.

Table 3
Range of NCE Gains Across Program Components, 1987-1990

Program Year	Range of Students Making NCE Gains, in Percent	Range of Students Gaining 2 or more NCEs, in Percent
1987	45.0 - 55.0	42.0 - 49.0
1988	55.0 - 67.1	48.0 - 60.2
1989	46.4 - 55.3	45.2 - 52.4
1990	54.0 - 77.0	52.4 - 74.0

In 1990, depending on the component and grade level, 54 to 77 percent of the students made NCE gains. In addition, between 52.4 and 74.0 percent of the students accelerated their rate of growth by gaining two or more NCEs and began to close the gap between themselves and their age-level peers nationally. The 1990 gains may be due to the equating of norms between tests. It is conceivable, however, that in specific schools the Reading Improvement Program had a distinct and positive impact.

The same components of the RIP program were implemented in the same schools between 1986 and 1990. Each year a percentage of the assigned staff changes and each year a substantial percentage of the students served changes. How schools select and train their staff, how schools implement the components of the program, and the intensity of the reading instruction in these schools may account for this variability from year to year.

In 1989 and 1990 some schools implementing the components of the program met the objective, while other schools did not; Table 4 serves to illustrate this fact.

Table 4
Number of Schools Meeting
the Achievement Objective by Component

Component	Program Year	Schools Meeting Objective	Schools Not Meeting Objective	N of Schools Returning Enrollment Forms
RRT	1989	10	56	66 of 136
RRT	1990	22	34	56 of 136
LEP	1989	4	9	13 of 36
LEP	1990	9	4	13 of 36
RCS	1989	6	53	59 of 65
RCS	1990	25	32	57 of 65
AST:Students	1989	17	278	295 of 304
AST:Students	1990	106	174	280 of 305
AST:Tutors	1989	15	49	64 of 304
AST:Tutors	1990	48	11	59 of 305

Note: Not all Reading Resource Teachers (RRTs) instruct students.
Results for 1989 and 1990 are based on returned enrollment forms.

Overall, in 1989, 42.8 percent of the students in the program had posttest NCE scores lower than their pretest scores. There were 4.6 percent of the students who maintained constant NCE scores between pre- and posttest, and 52.6 percent of the students gained one or more NCEs between pre- and posttest.

In 1990, 38.6 percent of the students in the program had posttest NCE scores lower than their pretest scores. There were 3.9 percent of the students who maintained constant NCE scores between pre- and posttest, and 57.5 percent of the students gained one or more NCEs between pre- and posttest.

READING RESOURCE TEACHER COMPONENT

Description

Reading Resource Teachers (RRTs) are assigned to schools where 50 percent of the students in grade three scored below stanine five and where an Intensive Reading Improvement Teacher (IRIP) or Department of Equal Education Opportunity Program facilitator (DEEOP) was not on staff. The resource teacher, under the direction of the principal, serves as a resource person, a reading specialist, and a diagnostician and coordinator of all elements of the school's reading program.

The responsibilities of the position include organizing and grouping students, identifying appropriate reading and language arts materials, and planning and implementing intervention and remediation strategies for students below the national norm in reading. In addition, the RRT organizes the After-School Tutoring program, if one exists, conducts and coordinates local staff development activities, and assists in coordinating the parent involvement plan which includes conducting parent workshops. There were 136 nonquota reading resource teachers in 1989 and in 1990.

Implementation

Although the RRT was not required to instruct students, the *Program Enrollment Form* identified 1,739 students served in 1989 and 1,347 students served in 1990. Two-thirds of the RRTs responding to a questionnaire at the end of the school year (n=98 in 1989 and n=101 in 1990), indicated that they taught students daily in grades one to six, predominantly one to three groups a day. Most teachers were experienced in this reading specialist position. Only 10 percent of the responding teachers were new to the program in 1989 and 16 percent were new in 1990.

The 1990 RRT teacher questionnaire results below show, in rank order, what the teachers identified as their most frequent tasks.

1. Coordinating reading instruction in the school
2. Sharing information from citywide staff development meetings
3. Implementing strategies to improve reading instruction
4. Conducting inservice activities for teaching staff
5. Administrative and clerical tasks
6. Initiating new reading instruction projects
7. Assisting staff in using test results to improve instruction.

Minimum time was spent on strategies to improve parent involvement, to conduct parent workshops, or to substitute in classrooms.

Regular Staff's Perceptions of Reading Resource Teachers

Regular classroom teachers were asked what activities the reading resource teacher initiated at their school. These responses, rank ordered, basically concur with those of the resource staff.

1. Identifying and disseminating instructional materials
2. Recommending intervention/remediation reading strategies
3. Coordinating staff development activities in the school
4. Organizing and grouping students.

Supplementary instruction from the RRTs was reported by classroom teachers as contributing to the progress their students made in overcoming deficiencies in reading skills, (89 percent of the 320 responses in 1989 and 66 percent of the 350 responses in 1990).

The strategies suggested by RRTs to expand the teaching of reading were applied by 88 percent of 327 classroom teachers reporting in 1989 and 81 percent of the 358 teachers in 1990. Of these teachers, 88 percent, for both years, felt the new techniques helped them to improve their teaching of reading.

Eighty-six percent of the 134 principals in 1989 and 93 percent of 120 principals in 1990 concurred with the classroom teachers' perceptions that school staff improved their teaching of reading skills as a result of the RRTs' activities. Most of the extended-day teachers (87 percent of 246 teachers in 1989 and 81 percent of 228 teachers in 1990) also felt the suggested techniques helped to improve their reading instruction.

The objective that 80 percent of the program staff and regular teaching staff would verify that staff development training they received improved their techniques and methods for teaching reading was met for both years.

Also significant is the continuous communication between classroom and resource teachers regarding student progress. Eighty-nine percent of the 316 sampled classroom teachers in 1989 reported they had ongoing communication with the resource teachers, as did 81 percent of the 357 teachers in 1990.

Staff Training in the School

To further develop the skills of RRTs, each year monthly half-day citywide inservice meetings are organized by the Bureau of Language Arts. Reading specialists, researchers, and authors from around the country present current findings and demonstrate practical methods for teaching reading.

In turn, RRTs provide activities at their schools to disseminate this information. A rank ordering of activities gathered from 162 multiple responses from the *RRT Questionnaire* indicates their most popular methods for disseminating current research findings.

1. Staff inservice and faculty meetings
2. Handouts and newsletters
3. Informal conversations with individual teachers
4. Classroom demonstrations
5. Formal workshops
6. Grade-level group meetings.

Regular classroom teachers reported attending school meetings where training topics included (in order of frequency): recreational reading, improving reading comprehension, reading in the content area, the reading-writing connection, and the whole-language approach to reading.

Classroom Observations

To further evaluate the Reading Resource component, evaluators observed a sample of 38 RRT classrooms in 1989 and 26 classrooms in 1990 to record students' activities and learning environments. These included student behavior, teaching strategies, lesson content, and materials in use. Data from these observations were used to determine if teaching behaviors and management strategies were consistent with the program design and philosophy.

More than half of the visits, conducted from October to June, found RRTs mainly serving primary level students, an average of 10 students present in the class, and the content of the lessons being reading and language arts. Teacher-directed instruction was most frequently observed in both 1989 and 1990 with the majority of instruction concentrating on teacher interaction with whole-class groups in a question-and-answer format.

It was anticipated that a larger percentage of RRTs would promote small-group and individualized sessions. The majority of lessons were presented clearly and held students' interest. Equitable response time was provided for the students. RRTs were observed to provide more encouragement and positive feedback, and state the lesson objective more frequently than did staff in the other program components.

Observed RRTs exhibited some of the instruction and management strategies consistent with the program design and philosophy, but with less frequency than anticipated. On average, the objective that at least 80 percent of the observed teaching staff would exhibit these strategies was not totally met in either year. Table 5 highlights the findings based on classroom visits in both school years.

Table 5

**Instruction and Management Strategies Exhibited by Reading
Resource Teachers During Classroom Observations**

Instruction Strategies	Percent	
	RRT-1989	RRT-1990
Stated the lesson objective	79	78
Presented the lesson clearly	90	96
Promoted problem-solving skills	76	36
Diversified instructional strategies	71	42
Provided equitable response time	96	69

Management Strategies	Percent	
	RRT-1989	RRT-1990
Provided mostly direct instruction	74	85
Actively monitored seatwork	86	80
Provided encouragement/feedback	97	80
Maintained discipline	100	96
Presented lesson held student interest	86	80
Provided small-group/individual instruction most of the time	39	44

Achievement Results

Reading comprehension test results for students participating in lessons conducted by the Reading Resource Teacher are illustrated in Table 6 for 1989 (N=1,216) and in Table 7 for 1990 (N=817).

Table 6

**1989 ITBS Reading Comprehension Results--RRT
Median Grade-Equivalent Gains, Percentage Making NCE Gains,
and Percentage Gaining Two or More NCE Units**

Grade	N with Matched Pre-Post	Median G.E. Gains	Percent Making NCE Gains	Percent Gaining 2 or more NCE Units
2	150	0.7	45.0	43.3
3	299	0.9	53.1	47.8
4	307	1.0	51.5	49.0
5	271	1.2	62.0	60.5
6	189	1.4	61.2	59.3

Note: Grade not coded for 33 students.

Median grade-equivalent gains in reading ranged from 0.7 to 1.4 years in 1989 and between 45 and 62 percent of the students made NCE gains. Between 43.3 and 60.5 percent of the students served by RRTs in 1989 accelerated their rate of growth by gaining two or more NCEs.

Table 7

**1990 ITBS Reading Comprehension Results--RRT
Median Grade-Equivalent Gains, Percentage Making NCE Gains,
and Percentage Gaining Two or More NCE Units**

Grade	N with Matched Pre-Post	Median G.E. Gains	Percent Making NCE Gains	Percent Gaining 2 or more NCE Units
2	134	0.1	18.0	18.0
3	142	0.8	47.2	43.0
4	167	0.9	53.3	52.1
5	196	1.3	70.4	68.4
6	178	1.5	69.7	68.5

Note 1: Grade not coded for 2 students.

Note 2: Comparisons of the 1989 and 1990 achievement results for this and all other components in the program should be made with caution. The proportionately higher gains made in 1990 may have been the result of the multiple conversions used in the equating process and may not reflect typical performance by the students.

Median grade-equivalent gains ranged from 0.1 to 1.5 years in 1990. Between 18.0 percent and 70.4 percent of the students made NCE gains. For students served by RRTs in 1990, between 18.0 and 68.5 percent of them accelerated their rate of growth by gaining two or more NCEs. The gains made by second graders were smaller than expected. The gains made at grades five and six are larger than expected. These results are believed to be a function of the equating process between the 1989 and 1990 tests.

Conclusions

- The 70 percent evaluation objective (improving by two or more NCEs) in 1989 was not met at any grade level, and the 60 percent objective in 1990 was met only at grades five and six.
- Program teachers viewed their main responsibility, other than instructing students, as coordinating the reading instruction program at their schools.
- RRTs cited as another major responsibility sharing information from citywide staff training meetings with their teachers. The strategies suggested by RRTs were applied by a majority of queried classroom teachers bringing the benefits of the citywide meetings, as intended, into some classrooms.

- Resource staff coordinated or assisted in the implementation of their schools' parent involvement plan. Conducting parent workshops or inservice training for parents was minimal in both 1989 and 1990.

Recommendations

- Local school councils, administrators, and program staff should examine local school and program test results to diagnose problems, needs, and solutions as the resource component is implemented in subsequent years.
- Reading resource teachers should play a more active role in conducting parent and staff-training activities. The reading specialist is in the best position and has received the most training in current reading research to acquaint teachers and parents with the best in reading practices and materials.

BILINGUAL CLASSROOM TEACHER COMPONENT

Description

The 36 nonquota bilingual classroom teachers and 36 bilingual paraprofessionals for limited-English-proficient (LEP) students are assigned to schools with the greatest number of bilingual students. The component design provides for teachers and the paraprofessionals they supervise to use a diversity of teaching/learning strategies to individualize instruction. Staff select materials specifically designed to assess LEP student needs and to remediate reading deficiencies.

Instruction focuses on improving the English reading ability of LEP students by following the guidelines for delivery of instruction for LEP students. Teachers and their assigned paraprofessionals are to provide individualized instruction for five to ten students, four days a week. Class sessions are held for at least three but not more than four small groups of students daily for a minimum of 45 minutes.

Staff in the LEP component also attend monthly citywide inservice sessions. In turn, they coordinate local staff development training for their colleagues, at least three per year, and coordinate parent workshops, at least five per year, for parents of bilingual students.

Implementation

Program Enrollment Forms received from the schools implementing this component identified 1,260 students served in 1989 and 1,153 students served in 1990. During 1989, 58 percent of the LEP students served were placed in instructional language Category A, 32 percent in Category B, and 10 percent in Category C. During 1990, 61 percent of the LEP students served were placed in Category A, 29 percent in Category B, and 10 percent in Category C.

LEP teachers, responding to a questionnaire at the end of the school year, (N=18 in 1989 and N=21 in 1990) taught, on average, four groups of students a day, five days a week. Almost two-thirds of the bilingual teachers for LEP students have been in this position for three or more years. Only four responding LEP teachers were new to the program in 1989; three teachers were new in 1990.

During 1989, all responding teachers (N=18) in this component provided some local inservice activities for bilingual staff. During 1990, a majority of LEP teachers (18 of 21) conducted some training sessions. Most of the LEP staff initiated one or more workshops for parents of bilingual students; an average of five meetings were held in each of the two years. Examples of the topics presented at these workshops included encouraging parents to read to their children, ESL classes for parent volunteers, how to build students' self-esteem, and how parents can help their children at home.

Because of overcrowded conditions in most of the bilingual schools, paraprofessionals often work directly in a bilingual classroom and not with the component teacher. Both the LEP teacher and the regular bilingual classroom teacher supervise the tasks of these paraprofessionals. More than half of the LEP teachers, responding to questionnaires at the end of each school year, reported developing and selecting special materials for teaching native language reading and ESL skills and concepts. Over half of the LEP staff also reported presenting demonstration lessons in the bilingual classrooms to model effective strategies for teaching reading and related language arts skills.

In addition to teaching students, a substantial amount of LEP staff time was spent coordinating their school's bilingual instruction program and assisting with their school's administrative and clerical tasks.

Regular Staff's Perceptions of the RIP Teacher for LEP Students

Toward the end of each school year, regular classroom teachers are surveyed to gain insight about the impact LEP teachers have in their schools. Responses were received from 36 teachers in 1989 and from 57 teachers in 1990. Slightly more than half of these teachers responded favorably, in both years, about their students' progress as a result of the tutoring offered by the LEP teacher. In each year a minority of regular teachers indicated that the additional instruction provided by the LEP teacher did not contribute to their students' progress despite the fact that, in both school years, a majority of responding teachers indicated there was continuous communication between them and the RIP teacher.

As a result of being instructed by the LEP teacher, regular staff indicated their students made the most improvement in reading for fun, in their improved attitude toward schoolwork, and in improving their self-esteem. Student attendance and parent involvement showed the least improvement.

Staff Training in the School

LEP teachers attended monthly citywide staff development training workshops and were expected to share this information with teachers in their schools. A majority of LEP teachers reported conducting some inservice training and classroom demonstrations for their staff. A few of them shared the information they learned with consistent diligence; a few LEP teachers did not perform these tasks at all. Regular classroom teachers (61 percent in 1989 and 78 percent in 1990) documented that LEP staff held more meetings of a formal or informal nature than they did in conducting reading lesson demonstrations in the classroom.

Topics most frequently presented included improving the teaching of reading comprehension, vocabulary development strategies, reading-writing connection, whole-language approach to reading, grouping for instruction, and strategies for improving parent involvement. In both years three-fourths of the teachers reported that the techniques and methods introduced by the LEP teacher helped them improve their reading instruction and that they applied the suggested strategies in their classrooms. It should be noted that evaluators did not conduct observations in these regular classrooms to verify that these strategies were put into practice.

Classroom Observations

To further evaluate the LEP component, observations were conducted in 22 classrooms during 1989 and in 27 classrooms during 1990. A bilingual evaluator designed an observation form to record instructional delivery to bilingual students. The form also recorded teaching strategies, student behavior, lesson content, materials used, the general classroom activities, and learning environment.

In both school years, classroom observations confirmed that the teachers of LEP students stated the lesson objective and presented lessons clearly. Generally, teachers promoted problem-solving skills, provided equal opportunities for students to participate in class discussions, and maintained orderly lessons. During the predominantly teacher-directed, whole-class oral instruction sessions, staff provided encouragement and positive feedback.

It was anticipated that more frequent individually-diversified and small-group lessons would be observed. Although effective structuring of lessons was frequently documented, very few of the strategies and teaching techniques presented at citywide meetings were observed. Word recognition and pronunciation of English and native language vocabulary were more frequently observed than comprehensive reading for meaning.

The average number of students enrolled in the LEP component was nine in 1989, and ten students in 1990. An average of eight students were present during class visits in 1989; an average of nine students were present in 1990. Reading and language arts were the most frequent subject areas observed. Lessons were often presented in the students' native language, although, portions of the lessons were augmented in English. The paraprofessional was present during the class session in only 6 of 22 classes visited in 1989 and 7 of 27 classes visited in 1990. During instruction time, the LEP assistants worked in regular or bilingual classrooms, supervised students in the lunchroom or hallways, performed clerical tasks, worked in the school's instructional laboratory, or assisted in the office.

An objective stated that at least 80 percent of the LEP teachers would exhibit teaching behaviors and job responsibilities consistent with the program design and philosophy as stated in the Reading Improvement Program proposal accepted by the state. During both 1989 and 1990, on average, the instruction and management objective was met.

Achievement Results

Reading comprehension test results for students participating in lessons conducted by the classroom teacher for LEP students can be found in Table 8 for 1989 and in Table 9 for 1990. In 1989, between 37.5 and 53.0 percent of the students served by LEP teachers accelerated their rate of growth by gaining two or more NCEs. Median grade-equivalent gains in reading ranged from 0.7 to 0.9 years in 1989 and between 37.5 percent and 53.0 percent of the students made NCE gains.

Table 8

**1989 ITBS Reading Comprehension Results--LEP
Median Grade-Equivalent Gains, Percentage Making NCE Gains,
and Percentage Gaining Two or More NCE Units**

Grade	N with Matched Pre-Post	Median G.E. Gains	Percent Making NCE Gains	Percent Gaining 2 or more NCE Units
4	34	0.9	53.0	53.0
5	16	0.7	37.5	37.5
6	17	0.7	41.1	41.1

Note: Grade not coded for 17 students.

Table 9

**1990 ITBS Reading Comprehension Results--LEP
Median Grade-Equivalent Gains, Percentage Making NCE Gains,
and Percentage Gaining Two or More NCE Units**

Grade	N with Matched Pre-Post	Median G.E. Gains	Percent Making NCE Gains	Percent Gaining 2 or More NCE Units
2	13	0.3	7.7	7.7
4	15	1.0	60.0	60.0
5	13	1.3	69.2	69.2
6	21	1.8	76.2	76.2

Note: Grade not coded for 3 students.

Median grade-equivalent gains ranged from 0.3 to 1.8 years in 1990. Between 7.7 and 76.2 percent of the students made NCE gains. The gains made by second graders were smaller than expected. The gains made at grade six were larger than expected. These results are believed to be a function of the equating process between the 1989 and 1990 tests. Between 7.7 and 76.2 percent of the students served by LEP teachers in 1990 accelerated their rate of growth by gaining two or more NCEs.

The 70 percent evaluation objective in 1989 was not met; the 60 percent objective in 1990 was met by 49 LEP students in grades four through six.

Teacher Assessment of Bilingual Students

Another measure of the success of the LEP component of the Reading Improvement Program in 1989 was to see if at least 75 percent of the students placed in bilingual instructional categories A or B at the beginning of the school year advanced to at least the next higher category by the end of the school year. In 1990, the objective was for 50 percent of the LEP students to advance to the next higher category. Table 10 furnishes the results for 1989 and Table 11 reports the results for 1990.

Table 10

Students Transitioned in 1989 LEP Component

Category	N	Percent Transitioned
A	346	41% (n=141)
B	186	48% (n= 89)
C	21	86% (n= 18)

[Data Source - 16 of 18 LEP Teacher Questionnaires]

Table 11

Students Transitioned in 1990 LEP Component

Category	N	Percent Transitioned
A	394	51% (n=201)
B	167	69% (n=115)
C	96	76% (n= 73)

[Data Source - 19 of 21 LEP Teacher Questionnaires]

LEP Teachers reported that 41 percent of Category A and 48 percent of the students in Category B in 1989 were transitioned to the next higher English language proficiency level. The 75 percent objective was not met. Although not part of the objective, 86 percent of the students in Category C were transitioned into the regular program in 1989. In 1990, however, the 50 percent objective was met at both bilingual instruction categories. There were 51 percent of the Category A and 69 Category B students who transitioned to the next higher category. In addition, 76 percent of Category C students moved into the regular program of instruction.

In both school years, LEP teachers were also asked to rate their students' progress in English and in their native language. The objective required at least 75 percent of the LEP students to receive progress ratings of "good," or better, in English and in their native language comprehension and expression. Tables 12 and 13 reflect the teacher assessments for the 1989 and 1990 school years, respectively.

Table 12**1989--English and Native Language Progress**

English	Rating	Native Language
3.8% (n= 45)	Excellent	9.9% (n=126)
34.1% (n=402)	Good	51.0% (n=645)
50.8% (n=598)	Fair	34.8% (n=441)
11.3% (n=133)	No Progress	4.3% (n= 54)
(n=143)	No Rating	(n= 55)

[Data Source--RIP Enrollment Form]

Table 13**1990--English and Native Language Progress**

English	Rating	Native Language
2.6% (n= 29)	Excellent	10.0% (n=108)
34.5% (n=379)	Good	47.9% (n=518)
53.3% (n=585)	Fair	39.6% (n=428)
9.5% (n=104)	No Progress	2.5% (n= 27)
(n= 56)	No Rating	(n= 72)

[Data Source--RIP Enrollment Form]

The 75 percent objective was not met in either year. Only 37.9 percent of the students in 1989 and 37.1 percent of the students in 1990 received progress ratings of "good" or better in their English language comprehension and expression. A total of 60.9 percent of the students in 1989 and 57.9 percent of the students in 1990 received progress ratings of "good" or better in native language comprehension and expression.

Excellent student progress in English was recorded in 1989 for 3.8 percent and for 2.6 percent in 1990. Excellent student progress in native language was recorded in 1989 for 9.9 percent and for 10.0 percent in 1990.

Bilingual Paraprofessionals' Interview Results

Paraprofessional staff have assisted the 36 bilingual classroom teachers in the LEP component of RIP since 1986. There were 36 paraprofessionals assigned in 1989; only 27 positions were filled in 1990. To determine the specific duties of the LEP assistants, a sample of paraprofessionals were interviewed.

Most assistants worked in the Reading Improvement Program between three and five years (20 of the 28 interviewed). Only one was new to the LEP component. The interviewed LEP paraprofessionals reportedly were supervised by the LEP teacher who assisted them with lesson plans, assigned them materials to prepare, and taught them how to use a variety of tutoring strategies with bilingual students.

Half of those interviewed, worked in the same room as the LEP teacher tutoring groups of three to twelve students. The remaining paraprofessionals worked separately from the RIP teacher in other rooms (supervised by the regular classroom teacher), in computer laboratories, and in makeshift space such as hallways. Paraprofessionals had minimal involvement with any of the parent involvement activities other than providing translation services.

To further document the involvement of these bilingual assistants, copies of their daily schedule were obtained. An analysis of the time they spent performing a variety of school tasks was conducted. The results, on average, show that 52 percent of the paraprofessionals' day was spent tutoring students and 34 percent of their time was spent in a supervisory capacity. They provided classroom preparation time for teachers; supervised in the halls and lunchroom; and, in emergency situations, monitored classrooms until substitutes arrived. They also spent 14 percent of their time on clerical tasks such as clerical assistance in the school office, duplicating materials, providing translation, and disseminating materials. Only one paraprofessional in one school spent the entire day performing clerical tasks and did not work directly with LEP students.

Conclusions

- The 70 percent evaluation objective (improving by two or more NCEs) in 1989 was not met; the 60 percent objective in 1990 was met by 49 students.
- The 75 percent objective in 1989 that called for LEP students to advance to the next higher instruction language category by year's end was not met; the 50 percent objective in 1990 was met at all category levels.
- The 75 percent objective that students would receive progress ratings of "good" or better in English and native language comprehension and expression was not met in either year.
- Few of the strategies and teaching techniques presented at citywide meetings were observed during LEP classroom visits.
- LEP teachers viewed their main responsibility, other than instructing students, as coordinating the bilingual program at their schools and performing administrative/clerical tasks.
- Some LEP staff shared information from citywide staff training meetings with their teachers. The strategies suggested by these LEP teachers were applied by a majority of survey classroom teachers.
- Because of overcrowding and other school needs, paraprofessionals worked infrequently with the LEP teacher during class time.

Recommendations

- Staff in this component have provided supplementary and supportive instruction to bilingual students. As such, more intense efforts are required to transition students.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on ESL transitional instruction for category B and C students. State mandates require LEP students to participate in the citywide English standardized testing program if they have been in the school system for three years.
- Bilingual staff, attending citywide training, should attempt to incorporate diversified strategies into their daily lessons and focus on promoting comprehension skills.

REDUCED CLASS SIZE

Description

The goal of the Reduced Class Size (RCS) component is to improve reading achievement, accelerate learning, and maximize each student's potential by reducing one class size at the same grade level to 18 students in one classroom. Local schools determine the grade level to reduce. Schools selected are those where 50 percent of the sixth grade students were one or more years below grade level in reading.

Activities expected of RCS teachers include:

- Implementing the regular daily program of instruction
- Employing the diagnostic-prescriptive approach to teaching
- Using alternative, but flexible grouping patterns, to maximize learning
- Reporting student progress and apprising parents how reading lessons are conducted
- Conducting meetings to acquaint parents with available materials and how they can help their children at home
- Applying appropriate techniques that help students comprehend content area reading materials
- Providing prompt and appropriate feedback
- Monitoring individual student learning and attendance.

Returned *Program Enrollment Forms* indicate that 1,564 students were instructed by 65 RCS teachers in 1989 and 1,166 students instructed by 65 teachers in 1990. Although schools could serve students in any grades one through six, 66 percent of the students enrolled in 1989 were sixth graders and 52 percent enrolled in 1990 were sixth graders.

Implementation

Almost all teachers worked in their own classrooms. The average number of students per classroom was 17 in both school years. The number of students per room ranged from 15 to 23 students in 1989 and from 12 to 27 students in 1990. Generally, the RCS divisions selected students from several classrooms to form one new division, in some instances one classroom was divided between two teachers. More than half of the teachers (62 percent) selected to serve in the RCS rooms had from two to five years' experience working with small class size divisions; however, almost one-third of the teachers were new to the RCS component both in 1989 and in 1990.

The majority of schools implementing the RCS component did not have a reading resource teacher on staff. Orientation for the teacher in the RCS Component was left up to the local school. RCS teachers were asked who provided them assistance or training. In both 1989 and 1990, approximately 73 percent of the teachers (n=44) received some training from principals or assistant principals or they were involved in some central office workshops or training seminars. No training, however, was provided for 27 percent of the RCS teachers in 1989 nor for 30 percent of the RCS staff in 1990.

The teachers were asked to rate the significance of the training they did receive to increase their effectiveness in teaching reading in a small class size setting. Of the 45 responses, only 17 percent rated the training as highly successful. Because almost one-third of the teachers in the component are new to this type program, staff training is clearly essential to provide the foundation for a successful instructional program.

Teachers' Perceptions of the RCS Component

Almost all of the teachers (96 percent) in the RCS component of RIP in 1989 felt their students' academic achievements were stronger because of their involvement in this more intimate instructional setting; 84 percent of the teachers in 1990 reported the same impression. In both years, component staff also indicated that other tangible assets of this small-group approach positively influenced students' self-esteem, improved attendance, improved attitude toward schoolwork, improved classroom behavior, and perhaps most important, increased students' enjoyment in reading for fun.

Teachers were asked to list the most successful techniques they use to individualize instruction. Common responses include the following:

- Flexible skill groupings
- Small heterogeneous groups for instruction
- Effective use of classroom discussion
- Increased use of interest and learning centers
- Individual writing activities to build self-concepts and reinforce reading comprehension
- Use of peer tutoring
- Frequent student conferences.

Teachers also emphasized utilizing the opportunities afforded by the smaller group size to implement the types of educational activities suggested in the original design of this component. These activities included increasing time for recreational reading, developing school-home communication, employing diverse teaching strategies, and promoting parent involvement.

Classroom Observations

To more fully understand the implementation and operation process of the component, evaluators from the Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning visited 65 classrooms in 1989 and 69 classrooms in 1990 between October and June.

During classroom visits, evaluators recorded the instructional and management strategies, students' activities, learning environments, student behavior, lesson content and materials in use. Observations found multiple instructional levels in one room with an average of 14 to 18 students per class and reading and language arts the predominant content areas presented. Although queried RCS teachers indicated that one of the most successful techniques to individualize instruction was to instruct in small, flexible groupings of students, observers found very few teachers using this format.

The type of teaching and management strategies one would expect to find in a class reduced in size to better address student needs decreased measurably between 1989 and 1990. Teachers basically were observed providing direct instruction to the whole class. Although a good deal of seatwork was evident, there was less frequent monitoring of this seatwork during 1990.

On average, lesson objectives were stated, lessons were presented clearly, and teachers provided equitable response time to most students. Other expected strategies, however, diminished in frequency in 1990. These strategies included promoting higher level and problem-solving skills, differentiating instruction, providing encouragement and positive feedback, and maintaining student interest and engagement in presented lessons. Maintaining discipline clearly was not a problem in either year. The objective that at least 80 percent of the observed teaching staff would exhibit these strategies was not met in either year.

Table 14

Instruction and Management Strategies Exhibited by Reduced Class Size Teachers During Classroom Observations

Instruction Strategies	Percent	
	RCS-1989	RCS-1990
Stated the lesson objective	82	67
Presented the lesson clearly	94	57
Promoted problem-solving skills	76	27
Diversified instructional strategies	65	28
Provided equitable response time	100	79

Management Strategies	Percent	
	RCS-1989	RCS-1990
Provided mostly direct instruction	53	61
Actively monitored seatwork	67	46
Provided encouragement/feedback	84	43
Maintained discipline	92	76
Presented lesson held student interest	85	59
Provided small-group/individual instruction most of the time	24	21

Achievement Results

Reading comprehension test results for 1,324 students participating in classes conducted by the Reduced Class Size Teacher are reported in Table 15 for 1989 and for 907 students in Table 16 for 1990.

Table 15

**1989 ITBS Reading Comprehension Results--RCS
Median Grade-Equivalent Gains, Percentage Making NCE Gains,
And Percentage Gaining Two or More NCE Units**

Grade	N with Matched Pre-Post	Median G.E. Gains	Percent Making NCE Gains	Percent Gaining 2 or more NCE Units
2	28	0.2	18.0	18.0
3	132	0.9	51.0	47.0
4	112	0.6	34.0	32.1
5	125	1.1	51.2	51.2
6	927	1.1	52.0	49.1

Note: Grade not coded for 26 students.

Median grade-equivalent gains in reading ranged from 0.2 to 1.1 years in 1989. Between 18.0 and 52.0 percent of the students made NCE gains. A range of 18.0 to 51.2 percent of the students served in the RCS in 1989 accelerated their rate of growth by gaining two or more NCEs.

Table 16

**1990 ITBS Reading Comprehension Results--RCS
Median Grade-Equivalent Gains, Percentage Making NCE Gains,
and Percentage Gaining Two or More NCE Units**

Grade	N with Matched Pre-Post	Median G.E. Gains	Percent Making NCE Gains	Percent Gaining 2 or more NCE Units
2	51	-0.1	5.9	5.9
3	111	0.7	41.4	37.8
4	80	0.9	52.5	52.5
5	134	1.2	60.4	58.2
6	531	1.2	66.1	63.8

The losses made by second graders were not expected. The gains made at grades five and six were somewhat larger than expected. These results are believed to be a function of the equating process between the 1989 and 1990 tests. Median grade-equivalent gains ranged from -0.1 to 1.2 years in 1990. Between 5.9 and 66.1 percent of the students made NCE gains. In 1990, between 5.9 and 63.8 percent of the students served in the RCS component accelerated their rate of growth by gaining two or more NCEs.

Conclusions

- The 70 percent evaluation objective (improving by two or more NCEs) in 1989 was not met at any grade level, and the 60 percent objective in 1990 was met only at grade six.
- This component of the Reading Improvement Program was not effectively or sufficiently implemented in either year.
- Although the RCS component did not impact decisively on academic achievement, the small class size had a positive influence, according to staff, on students' self-esteem, on improved attendance, on attitude toward school, and on behavior in the classroom.
- Local staff training in this component was inadequate at many schools.

Recommendations

- Local schools need to provide staff development intervention strategies to significantly impact the value of instruction in a small class size setting; especially strategies in the teaching of reading.
- Component goals need to be clearly communicated by the educational leader of the school, namely the principal.
- To maximize benefits of a RCS, less emphasis should be placed on whole-class instruction and greater emphasis placed on meaningful, small-group instruction and independent assignments.

AFTER-SCHOOL TUTORING

Description

Extended-day tutoring was provided for students in grades one to six in schools where 50 percent of the students in grade six were one or more years below grade level. There were 1,166 teachers, 32 lead teachers and 370 seventh and eighth grade tutors serving 10,724 students in 304 schools during 1989. In 1990, the After-School Tutoring (AST) component was implemented in 305 schools for 8,992 students served by 1,168 teachers, 25 lead teachers, and 267 seventh and eighth grade tutors.

On average, seven to ten students per room received two additional hours of reading instruction each week for 19 weeks. In a few schools the extended-day instruction was provided prior to the opening of the school day. Additional funds were provided for tutorial materials that were different from those used during the regular school day.

Seventh and eighth grade tutor volunteers, under the supervision of the teacher, provided support and helped improve the reading progress of participating students as well as their own reading skills. Stipends were not available through the program according to state guidelines, but teachers were encouraged to provide some form of incentives (i.e., certificates or special recognition at assemblies).

The purpose of AST is to increase the instructional time in reading for students with more individualized attention in a relaxed, nonthreatening environment. Suggested instructional strategies include small-group and tutorial instruction, independent self-directed and self-corrective activities, and the teaching of test-taking skills.

Implementation

The extended-day component generally began in October or November and continued through April (ending just prior to citywide testing). The teaching staff was comprised mainly of classroom teachers, RIP staff and IRIP teachers. Others reported involved were special education and ESEA Chapter 1 teachers.

Stanford Diagnostic Reading pretests were used to group students by 76 percent of the 309 queried AST staff in 1989 and 73 percent of the 362 AST teachers in 1990. Most teachers (88 percent in 1989 and 91 percent in 1990) also used the pretest results to select the appropriate level of instructional materials.

AST teachers reported instructing heterogeneously assigned grade levels. In both years, over 60 percent of the teachers indicated they taught two or more instructional levels of students in the same classroom. The average number of students per classroom was ten, the range being from 1 to 16 in 1989 and from 7 to 15 in 1990. The average number of tutors per room was one, in those few schools able to recruit seventh and eighth graders. The majority of students served were enrolled in third to sixth grade. Analysis of the AST teacher questionnaire information corroborated the data collected by program evaluators during onsite visits.

Late arrival of AST materials has been consistent year after year, and the 1989 and 1990 school years were no exceptions. Late or nondelivery of materials was cited by 21 percent of 362 teachers in 1990.

Citywide staff training was not provided for AST staff; however, informal local training and assistance were provided by some reading resource teachers to ensure that AST staff would carry out the goals and objectives of the tutorial component. Schools housing five or more AST classrooms employed lead teachers who conducted informal training sessions prior to implementing the AST component. In some instances, principals or assistant principals offered assistance.

An important element of AST is the communication between the extended-day teacher and the regular classroom teacher regarding student progress. Over 70 percent of the regular classroom teachers reported having continuous communication with AST teachers in both school years. A slightly higher percentage of AST staff confirmed that dialogue and communication was continuous throughout the duration of the tutoring program. An added bonus of the extended-day program, according to a vast majority of regular class teachers, was the improvement in students' interest in reading for fun, in their improved self-esteem and classroom behavior, and in their attitude toward school.

After-School Tutoring Teachers' Perceptions

To obtain more information, surveyed AST teachers were asked to comment on the extended-day program in 1989. Thirty-four percent of the 353 responding teachers provided suggestions for program improvement and or benefits. Some suggestions included:

- Program was too limited or restrictive--it should have more hours, more days, more weeks, and more students
- More reading materials should be provided
- Students would benefit more if sessions were held before school.

Some benefits of this component in RIP included:

- Many students gained one or more years on the ITBS
- Students gained confidence and their self-esteem improved
- Students began to enjoy reading.

One teacher's comment is worth noting. "Activities and techniques not used during the regular school day are more successful in AST. Activities such as oral reading, silent reading, discussion, play writing, and reading are more readily accepted and serve as motivation for additional reading."

In 1990 AST staff were asked why they felt the extended-day tutorial program was important. Eighty-four percent of the 442 responding teachers praised this component of RIP.

- The individualized attention in a small class setting permitting one-on-one tutorial instruction was the major focus according to 62 percent of 372 teachers
- The materials used were creative, stimulating, flexible, and encouraged student enthusiasm to read (n=46 teachers)
- Students participated with others at the same instructional level, didn't feel self-conscious, and were more willing to participate (n=38 teachers)
- Students learned to read for enjoyment and fun (n=36 teachers)
- Students gained self-confidence and were more motivated to read (n=32 teachers)
- AST provided an opportunity to reinforce classroom reading and gave remedial students that extra help
- Students thoroughly enjoyed reading, especially acting out roles and participating in the oral discussions.

Several teachers took the time to mention the poignant experiences students found in AST, their comments are worth sharing.

"Students whose academic progress has been limited are allowed to demonstrate unique talents. Students who are generally reluctant in regular classrooms become more active learners in AST."

"Children in my AST class had holes in their reading foundations. It would be very difficult for a classroom teacher to find these areas for each student and remediate them. The group, in general, was very turned off to reading and to school. I tried to emphasize the practical real-life application of reading comprehension."

"The extended-day component is important because it supplements, supports, enriches and broadens reading experiences for students. I've been able to improve the reading comprehension and thinking skills of the low-achieving student and increase the motivational level of all the students."

Regular Classroom Teachers' Perceptions

Classroom teachers were asked if they saw any problems with the AST program in both school years. One-third of the 279 teachers responding in 1989 and half of the 443 teachers in 1990 cited these areas of concern:

- A smoother transition was needed for students to get to their designated AST locations. Students need time to release pent-up energy and have something to eat.
- In some schools, the physical plant was too cold after the regular day's program.
- There are no crossing guards when the children go home and it is too dark in the winter months. Begin the sessions before school starts in the morning.
- Communication between the AST teachers and the regular classroom teachers should include planning before the program starts. Agreement on the objectives, skills, and materials should be ongoing during the component's operation. Follow-up evaluation and student progress reports need to be included.
- Expand the program; it's too restrictive. Lengthen the sessions from October to June, meet four days a week, extend the sessions to 90 minutes.
- Serve first and second grade students--that is where reading begins and problems can be resolved early in a child's academic life.
- Schools with four or more AST classes should have a paid teacher leader.
- Improve the student selection process--in some instances the wrong children are chosen.

Classroom Observations

To ascertain the consistency of teaching and management strategies with the component design and philosophy, a sample of onsite visits was conducted by evaluation staff. A total of 145 classrooms in 75 schools in 1989 and 151 classrooms in 74 schools in 1990 were observed. The visits represent a cross section of districts, grades, and days of the week. Tutors were observed in 34 classrooms.

Observations in 1989 and 1990 found teachers instructing students predominantly in reading and language arts. In 1990, program evaluators determined the most frequent formats to be: seatwork, question and answer sessions, and oral reading and discussion.

Teachers stated the lesson objective and presented the lesson clearly in a majority of observed classrooms. During independent seatwork, teachers actively monitored student progress. Small-group instruction and individual assistance was infrequently observed in either year. During class discussion, teachers provided equitable response time and the lessons presented appeared to hold student interest.

While a variety of materials were observed in use, generally the whole-class group was involved in the same task and a variety of instructional strategies was observed less frequently than anticipated. The evaluation objective that 80 percent of the AST staff would exhibit teaching and management strategies reflective of the program design and philosophy was more apparent in 1989 than in 1990.

Table 17

**Instruction and Management Strategies Exhibited by Teachers
In After-School Tutoring During Classroom Observations**

Instruction Strategies	Percent	
	AST-1989	AST-1990
Stated the lesson objective	78	61
Presented the lesson clearly	97	83
Promoted problem-solving skills	70	39
Diversified instructional strategies	56	19
Provided equitable response time	95	69

Management Strategies	Percent	
	AST-1989	AST-1990
Provided mostly direct instruction	81	72
Actively monitored seatwork	81	70
Provided encouragement/feedback	95	67
Maintained discipline	96	94
Presented lesson held student interest	94	79
Provided small-group/individual instruction most of the time	38	30

A significant change in the materials used was noted between 1989 and 1990. Commercial workbooks were used extensively (54 percent) in 1989 as well as chalkboard assignments and commercial dittoes. In 1990, classroom visits found textbooks (reading in the content areas) in 71 percent of the rooms and the elimination of the school basal readers. An increase in software for noncomputer hardware also was evident in 22 percent of the classrooms. The software observed included tapes, records, and filmstrips.

Achievement Results

Reading comprehension test results for 9,141 students participating in lessons conducted by teachers in AST are reported in Table 18 for 1989 and for 6,798 students in Table 19 for 1990. Tutor scores (N=351) for 1989 are reported in Table 20 and 1990 tutor scores (N=261) are reported in Table 21.

Table 18

**1989 ITBS Reading Comprehension Results--AST/Students
Median Grade-Equivalent Gains, Percentage Making NCE Gains,
and Percentage Gaining Two or More NCE Units**

Grade	N with Matched Pre-Post	Median G.E. Gains	Percent Making NCE Gains	Percent Gaining 2 or more NCE Units
1	28	0.6	86.0	86.0
2	319	0.7	47.0	44.5
3	1,613	0.9	56.2	54.0
4	2,530	0.9	47.4	45.2
5	2,423	1.1	57.0	54.0
6	2,228	1.1	53.0	50.0

Note: Grade not coded for 115 students.

Students' median grade-equivalent gains in reading ranged from 0.6 to 1.1 years in 1989 and between 47 and 86 percent of them made NCE gains. Between 44.5 and 86.0 percent of the students participating in AST in 1989 accelerated their rate of growth by gaining two or more NCEs.

In 1990, median grade-equivalent gains ranged from 0.2 to 1.3 years and between 20.4 and 67.8 percent of the students made NCE gains. Between 19.4 and 65.0 percent of the students in the AST component in 1990 gained two or more NCEs. The gains made by second graders were smaller than expected. The gains made at grades five and six were larger than expected. These results are believed to be a function of the equating process between the 1989 and 1990 tests.

Table 19

1990 ITBS Reading Comprehension Results--AST/Students
Median Grade-Equivalent Gains, Percentage Making NCE Gains,
and Percentage Gaining Two or More NCE Units

Grade	N with Matched Pre-Post	Median G.E. Gains	Percent Making NCE Gains	Percent Gaining 2 or more NCE Units
2	392	0.2	20.4	19.4
3	1,409	0.7	46.8	44.2
4	1,716	0.9	54.5	52.2
5	1,751	1.3	67.8	65.0
6	1,530	1.3	66.5	64.7

Note: Grade not coded for four students.

Table 20

1989 ITBS Reading Comprehension Results--AST/Tutors
Median Grade-Equivalent Gains, Percentage Making NCE Gains,
and Percentage Gaining Two or More NCE Units

Grade	N with Matched Pre-Post	Median G.E. Gains	Percent Making NCE Gains	Percent Gaining 2 or more NCE Units
7	136	1.3	52.2	43.4
8	215	1.3	56.0	51.2

For seventh and eighth grade tutors who assisted in the AST component in 1989, the median grade-equivalent gain in reading was the same--1.3 years. There was little difference in grades seven and eight for the percentage of tutors making NCE gains--52.2 and 56.0 percent, respectively. Eighth grade tutors accelerated their rate of growth by gaining two or more NCEs in 1989 somewhat more often than seventh grade tutors--51.2 percent and 43.4 percent, respectively.

In 1990, the tutors' median grade-equivalent gains in reading were 1.8 years in grade seven and 1.4 years in grade eight. A total of 72.6 percent of the grade eight tutors and 81.9 percent of the grade seven tutors made NCE gains. In 1990, 69.1 percent of the eighth grade tutors and 79.5 percent of the seventh grade tutors accelerated their rate of growth by gaining two or more NCEs. The 1990 gains of the seventh and eighth grade tutors in AST were larger than expected. These results are believed to be a function of the equating process between the 1989 and 1990 tests.

Table 21

**1990 ITBS Reading Comprehension Results--AST/Tutors
Median Grade-Equivalent Gains, Percentage Making NCE Gains,
and Percentage Gaining Two or More NCE Units**

Grade	N with Matched Pre-Post	Median G.E. Gains	Percent Making NCE Gains	Percent Gaining 2 or more NCE Units
7	122	1.8	81.9	79.5
8	139	1.4	72.6	69.1

Conclusions

The number of teachers involved in the AST component who took the time to write about the strengths and weaknesses of their experiences was overwhelming. Their comments during the 1989 and 1990 school years mirror remarks of teachers who worked in the component in prior years. It is evident from these remarks that a majority of the problems that exist in the component are solvable at the school level. It is conceivable that during the next implementation of the AST component, issues addressed in this report can be resolved if communication between staff is ongoing, and if communication between teachers and the school administrator is open.

- Classroom teachers and AST teachers viewed students' gaining confidence in themselves, a new enthusiasm to read for fun, and improved reading skills to be a bonus of the extended-day component.
- While recommended in the component design, few seventh and eighth grade tutors participated regularly in AST sessions.
- Implementation of the AST component has been consistent, however, in recent years more emphasis is being placed on reading in the content area and a move away from dittoes and workbooks.
- The 70 percent evaluation objective (improving by two or more NCEs) for students was met only at grade two in 1989. Tutors in 1989 did not meet the objective.
- In 1990, the 60 percent objective for students was met only at grades five and six. Tutors met the objective in 1990.

Recommendations

- Many of the suggestions offered by regular classroom teachers and AST staff can and should be effected at the local school.
- AST teachers, working with 10 students, should be able to provide more individualized instruction and alternate teaching strategies that address different learning styles.
- Ongoing communication between AST staff and regular classroom teachers should continue.
- Materials specifically selected for use in the AST component should include high interest materials not used in classes during the regular school day.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Research Findings

Research studies in reading show that teacher influence is critical to student success. *The 1990 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Yearbook* perceives the central mission as one generating change in the very culture of the school--to develop human resource development systems where educational personnel can grow productively. The editors state that the focus should be on the structure and the process of staff development--not necessarily on its content. The future of the school will be fashioned by how staff development systems evolve.

Recent research suggests that teachers are more likely to change their teaching behaviors and use new ideas under the following conditions:

- They become aware of a need for improvement.
- They make a written commitment to try new ideas in their classrooms the next day.
- They modify workshop ideas to make them work in the classroom and evaluate their effects.
- They observe in each others classroom (peer coaching), analyze their own data, and report findings to the group.
- They discuss problems and solutions regarding students and teaching subject matter.
- They try a wide variety of teaching approaches (diversify their instructional strategies).
- They learn in their own way, continually setting new goals.

Description

Staff from the Bureau of Language Arts organized eight monthly citywide staff development workshops for all reading resource teachers and teachers of LEP students. These inservice sessions, held from October through May in both school years, focused on strategies that would assist schools in implementing their reading program. The nonquota RIP teachers are expected to attend the monthly meetings and bring the information acquired at these workshops back to their schools to disseminate to their staff.

The workshop presenters included Chicago Board of Education administrators, authors, university professors, research experts, reading and writing specialists, consultants, and textbook publishers. The half-day training sessions usually featured two guest speakers each month presenting recent research and practical techniques to teach reading and related language arts content.

A sample of topics for 1989 and 1990 included:

- Integrating Shared Reading
- Assessing, Reflecting and Planning Group Participation
- Reading and Writing from Imagination
- Creating Active Readers of Content Material
- Proposal Writing and Grant Procurement
- Creating a Literate Environment
- The Current Status of Reading Instruction
- Improving the Teaching of Writing
- Reading Instruction for the 90's
- Multicultural Education and Reading in the Classroom
- Literature in the Reading Program
- Whole Language: Putting Theory into Practice
- Poetry is for Everyone
- Current Research in Reading
- Elements of Good Phonics Instruction
- Critical Thinking Strategies in Reading

Additional inservice training was scheduled specifically for teachers of LEP students to assist them in meeting the needs of their bilingual students. Teachers also were exposed to the use of both bilingual and monolingual reading and language arts materials for their classrooms.

Implementation

The evaluation of staff development focused on teacher attendance at these citywide meetings and the extent and effectiveness of local staff training. Also considered in the evaluation process was the degree to which information from local staff training meetings was integrated and practiced during instruction time, according to surveyed regular classroom teachers and observed program teachers during classroom visits.

Evaluation Results

The evaluation question to assess the staff development component remained the same between 1989 and 1990--Did at least 95 percent of the reading resource and bilingual classroom teachers for LEP students attend all eight scheduled staff development workshops to improve their teaching skills?

In 1989, 16 percent of the RIP staff attended all eight scheduled staff development workshops. In 1990, the percentage increased to 25 percent. The objective was not met in either year. Five or more (a majority) workshops were attended by 79 percent of RIP staff in 1989 and 83 percent in 1990. RIP teachers attending at least four sessions totalled 88 percent in both the 1989 and 1990 school years. Results are reflected in Table 22.

Table 22

**Reading Resource Teacher (RRT) and Bilingual Teacher
for Limited-English-Proficient Students (LEP)
Attendance at 1989 and 1990 Citywide Workshops**

Percent in Attendance 1989	Scheduled Monthly Workshops	Percent in Attendance 1990
RRT & LEP		RRT & LEP
16%	Eight	25%
25%	Seven	28%
25%	Six	18%
13%	Five	12%
9%	Four	5%
6%	Three	8%
3%	Two	2%
2%	One	2%
1%	None	--

[N=170 filled positions]

[N=168 filled positions]

Responding to a staff questionnaire at the end of each school year, resource and bilingual teachers offer reasons why attendance at every citywide meeting was not possible. As in previous years, the major reasons for teachers missing the monthly workshops in the 1989 and 1990 school years were pressing school activities and district events. Illness accounted for teacher absences throughout the year. Lower attendance rates in April were the result of administration and supervision of the citywide testing program. The objective for perfect attendance at these workshops by 95 percent of the staff seems unrealistic.

To determine the effectiveness and extent of local staff training by RIP resource teachers, questionnaires were sent to those schools where resource staff was assigned. The results from questionnaires sent to regular classroom teachers and AST staff are shown in Tables 23 and 24.

The objective for the staff development component required at least 80 percent of the regular and program teaching staff to verify that the staff training they received would improve their techniques and methods for teaching reading. The objective was met in both 1989 and 1990 for the RRTs. AST staff in schools with large bilingual populations did not respond as favorably as regular classroom teachers to the training they received from LEP teachers. The data suggest that RRTs were more involved than LEP teachers with training AST staff.

It is also noteworthy that in both years for both resource staffs, a significant percentage of regular and AST teachers reported that the training they received did not help them improve their teaching of reading skills or, more important, no meetings were provided. These ratings have been consistent for the past several years.

Table 23

**After-School Tutoring Teachers' Rating of the
Training Provided Them by Reading Resource Teachers (RRT) or
Bilingual Teachers of Limited-English-Proficient Students (LEP)**

RRT Percent		Increased My Skills:	LEP Percent	
1989	1990		1989	1990
52	52	Yes, a great deal	43	39
29	35	Yes, some	32	31
7	2	No	6	9
12	11	No meetings provided	19	21
N=(228) (246)			N=(53) (64)	

Table 24

**Regular Classroom Teachers' Rating of the
Training Provided Them by Reading Resource Teachers (RRT) or
Bilingual Teachers of Limited-English-Proficient Students (LEP)**

RRT Percent		Increased My Skills:	LEP Percent	
1989	1990		1989	1990
44	44	Yes, a great deal	43	45
44	44	Yes, some	43	37
7	7	No	7	4
5	5	No meetings provided	7	14
N=(327) (354)			N=(30) (56)	

In classrooms and in schools with trained resource staff, it was anticipated that observers would find specific teaching and management strategies used with greater frequency. For example, less whole-group instruction and more individual attention; stressing higher order thinking and problem-solving skills and less of the traditional question/answer sessions that rely on rote feedback; more purposeful monitoring of independent seatwork; and, especially, a wider diversity of teaching strategies to include peer coaching, cooperative learning, and lesson presentations that address multiple learning styles. Observations of citywide staff development training sessions indicated that they have tried to discourage the use of oral round-robin reading that focuses on word recognition and little or no emphasis on reading comprehension. In spite of that fact, local school training provided by project staff continued to stress this discredited technique.

Conclusions

- Affecting change in teaching behaviors in the classroom still remains a challenge in most schools where a nonquota teacher is selected as the monolingual or bilingual reading specialist.
- The evaluation objective that assesses attendance at the staff development training sessions has not been met since the inception of the Reading Improvement Program.
- The evaluation objective that assesses the impact of local staff training by reading specialists, (monolingual/bilingual) has only been partially met in the last several years.
- Some RRTs and LEPs fully implemented their components and the staff development component; others were instructing students most of the time or performing clerical and administrative tasks.
- A significant number of nonquota resource staff did not provide any staff training in their schools. For the majority of reading resource specialists who provided staff training, the most frequent format was to informally share written material or schedule grade-level information discussions.

Recommendations

- Staff development training should continue and the objective should be changed to address the reality of nonquota resource staffs' ability to attend all scheduled meetings.
- School administrators need to reflect on their rationale and specific priorities for selecting a reading specialist (whether monolingual or bilingual), with state initiative funds.
- The clerical tasks performed by trained professional reading specialists should be delegated to paraprofessionals.
- Techniques and strategies should be planned for providing local inservice training and especially classroom demonstrations.
- Direct instruction of students should be included in the daily schedule of RRTs, as it is for LEP teachers, to experiment with the information learned at citywide meetings.
- Reading specialists should have a very visible presence in staff development training in their schools for both parents and teachers.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Description

Each RIP school was encouraged to develop a parent involvement plan and program teachers were to assist the principal in coordinating this plan. RIP resource staff and paraprofessionals were expected to conduct parent workshops. Some of them might also have assisted in other ongoing parent activities that included open houses, book fairs, learning exchanges and assemblies.

Parent Activities

Principals made a concerted effort to provide for more parent participation at their schools in the 1989 and 1990 school years. Strategies developed and implemented to involve parents in their children's education were cited by 93 percent of the 261 principals responding to the 1989 Principal Questionnaire and 95 percent of the 125 responding principals in 1990.

Volunteer programs and parent reading workshops were the most popular parent involvement activities planned, according to school staff. Many of the workshops and inservice training focused on reading. Some of the other school events included programs developed by the Family Study Institute. A *Reading-at-Home* program; *SMARTnight Sportsminds* focused on reading together at home and highlighted a Chicago Bears team member's presentation on sports and reading; *Becoming a Family of Readers* had parents sign a monthly reading form to monitor their children's nightly reading experiences; and *Teacher-Parent-Student Contract* where all three members agreed to increase time spent together reading and writing. Contracts were monitored each quarter by teachers and the principal. Parents and students attended conferences the first and third marking periods to discuss their reading progress.

Additional special parent activities reported by schools included: a *Home Computer Program*, *Pizza Hut's Book-It* program, seasonal and holiday festivities, libraries created for parents to check out books to read to their children at home, and book fairs. One school established a diverse parent involvement program that included a chorus for mothers and fathers, training classes in English as a Second Language (ESL), and classes to earn a General Education Degree (GED). In addition, this school provided stipends for parent volunteers, organized parent management of the school book store, established regular telephone conferences, and set up a parent center.

Staff's Contributions to Parent Involvement

A total of 69 percent of the 100 RIP reading resource teachers and 21 teachers (81 percent) for LEP students, reported coordinating or assisting in the implementation of the school's parent involvement activities. Some of the events included: inservice training, parent volunteer programs, book fairs, informational newsletters and fliers, home reading programs, and tutoring and reading marathons. Workshops were also conducted to assist parents to take a more active role in their children's education. These activities predominated during both the 1989 and 1990 school years.

Questionnaire responses from RIP staff indicated that 46 percent of the reading resource teachers and 62 percent of the teachers for LEP students conducted parent workshops during the 1990 school year. This is comparable to staff participation in parent workshop activities during the 1989 school year. It was anticipated, in the program proposal, that a greater percentage of program staff would take a more active role in the initiation of parent involvement activities at their schools.

Staff's Perceptions of Parent Involvement

Questionnaires were sent to school staff at the end of each year to ascertain if 75 percent of the parents had improved their involvement in their children's reading progress and in the school's reading program during 1989 and 1990. As a result of school-based activities, 94 percent of the 125 queried principals felt that parents were more involved during the 1990 school year as compared to the 47 percent response in 1989. This increase could be attributed to more creative plans designed specifically for each school's parent population.

Less than half of the queried regular classroom teachers (43 percent), whose students participated in a Reading Improvement Program component, felt that parent involvement had improved for the 1989 and the 1990 school years. According to program teachers, parents of students in the self-contained reduced class size component fell short of meeting the evaluation objective for improved parent involvement. However, more than 75 percent of the program teachers in the pullout components viewed parent involvement as increasing.

Parents' Perceptions and Participation

To substantiate the type of parent involvement activities offered at local schools, a questionnaire was sent to parents in both 1989 and 1990. Parents were asked to list the type of school events they attended. Of the 558 responses received in 1989 and 500 received in 1990, the following examples of parent participation were listed most often. Aside from report card pickup days and individual parent conferences, accompanying children on field trips was the most popular event in which parents were involved. Other frequently mentioned activities included volunteering at school, and attendance at P.T.A. meetings and school assemblies.

According to parents responding to the end-of-year questionnaire, schools also scheduled book fairs, fund raisers, international festivals, luncheons, talent shows, bake sales, school dances, fashion shows, and parent award presentations. Included in the list of school activities developed to encourage parent participation were art fairs, yard sales, baseball games, and parenting programs. Parents offered suggestions of their own to stimulate parent participation which featured more frequent communication with parents and teachers and activities where parents can work with their children.

In 1989 and 1990, 87 percent (n=551) and 86 percent (n=428), respectively, of the responding parents indicated they were more involved than previously with their children's reading progress and in school activities. The objective that 75 percent of the parents will improve their involvement in their children's reading progress and in the school's reading program as a result of school-initiated activities was partially met.

Table 25

Parent Involvement Objective Results

Source	1989 Objective		1990 Objective	
	Met	Not Met	Met	Not Met
Principal		X	X	
Regular Classroom Teacher		X		X
RIP Teachers--Pullout	X		X	
RIP Teachers--Self-Contained		X		X
Parents	X		X	

The differences between the staff's and parents' perceptions of the degree and kind of parent involvement during 1989 and 1990 were similar to those which occurred in the program in previous school years. These differences may be the result of the phrasing on the questionnaires and, more explicitly, what constitutes involvement. It is a fact, however, that over the past five years of the Reading Improvement Program, local schools have aggressively initiated programs to attract parent interest and awareness in the school's educational program.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Information gathered from parent questionnaires and program enrollment forms further substantiate the trend in parent/teacher communication. Data revealed that RIP teachers communicated with parents on the average of two to three times a year in person, via note, or by telephone. The RCS and LEP teachers tended to talk to parents more in person, whereas, the reading resource and after-school tutoring teachers relied on notes and telephone calls.

Parents viewed the parent-teacher conferences as the main vehicle to learn about their children's progress. Other methods included report card pickup, notes, and phone calls. Program teachers indicated that the parents of almost three-fourths of the children served were given suggestions on how to help their children at home as well as providing materials for home use.

Parent responses (59 percent) indicate that teachers requested they help their children at home and 90 percent of the parents reported doing so. Parents, overall, were pleased with the Reading Improvement Program. As a result of their children's participation in RIP, 95 percent of the parents felt their children were doing better in school in 1989 and the percentage increased to 97 percent in 1990.

Conclusions

- Principals and school staff aggressively developed creative parent involvement activities, especially in 1990.
- RIP resource teachers helped to implement the school's strategies to heighten parent participation in their children's reading progress and the school's reading program.
- Many resource teachers failed to initiate parent workshops.
- Parents viewed themselves as more involved with their children's reading progress.
- Parents felt their children were doing better in school as a result of the RIP program.

Recommendations

- Schools should continue to create meaningful parent participation activities and replace unsuccessful ones.
- RIP reading resource teachers should be more directly involved with parent workshops and other parent involvement activities at their school.
- More communication between parent and school is needed--stressing the importance of the parents' role in their children's education and the educational benefits of parents helping their children at home.

ATTENDANCE

Description

Since the inception of the State Initiative Reading Improvement Program, schools were encouraged to develop attendance incentive plans to improve student attendance. School years 1989 and 1990 were no exception. During these two school years, incentive programs varied from school to school. The following categories were reported the most often.

- **Award Assemblies:** presentation of certificates, badges, pins, and trophies
- **Special Recognition:** listing student names in school media and on bulletin boards, student photos posted, names on banners, special stickers on report cards, and names announced over the public address system.
- **Special Activities:** parties; movies; computer privileges; story-telling; extra gym; field trips; the *Book-It* reading program; video programs; and breakfasts and luncheons honoring students, their parents, teachers, and principal.
- **Prizes and Gifts:** bicycles, pencils, pens, key chains, bookmarks, t-shirts, baseball tickets, puzzles, watches, baseball bats, cameras, magazines, posters, and toys. Many local merchants donated such prizes.

Attendance Results

The evaluation objective on school attendance in both 1989 and 1990 called for at least 90 percent of the schools to develop an incentive program to encourage perfect attendance. Attendance incentive programs were initiated and the objective was met according to 93 percent of the 261 principal questionnaire responses received in 1989. The objective was not met in 1990 where only 85 percent of the 104 administrators indicated that attendance incentive programs were in place.

During the 1990 school year the attendance objective also called for at least 90 percent of the RIP schools to improve attendance rates over the previous year. This objective was not met. Based on Chicago Public Schools' attendance records, 40 percent (132 schools) increased attendance from 1989 to 1990. (See Table 26.)

Table 26
RIP School Attendance
1989-1990

	<u># of Schools</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Improved attendance	132	40
Maintained attendance	19	6
Decreased attendance	179	54
Total	330	100%

In 1990, eleven schools not implementing an incentive program, had maintained a good average daily attendance record by maintaining rates at or above the citywide daily attendance average of 92.5 percent. In another seven schools without attendance initiatives, administrators reported attendance rates dropped (a range of .001 to 1.6 percent) from the previous year.

Although the school attendance objective was not completely met in 1990, the overall average attendance for schools implementing the RIP increased from 1989 to 1990; 92.4 to 92.7 percent. The average citywide elementary attendance decreased slightly from 92.6 percent in 1989 to 92.5 percent in 1990. Nineteen RIP schools had a 1.0 to 1.9 percent increase and attendance rates in 34 schools fell from 1.0 to 3.8 percent. The average daily attendance of the 330 RIP schools ranged from 81.2 to 96.2 in 1989 and from 79.5 to 96.6 percent in 1990.

Principals were asked if school attendance had improved in the 1990 school year. Eighty-one percent of the 125 administrative responses reflected positive attendance improvement. Regular classroom teachers, whose students were program participants, also reported improved student attendance resulting from RIP involvement. Table 27 examines the percentage of regular classroom teachers who reported improved attendance of their students by the component in which they participated.

Table 27
Improved Student Attendance by Program Component
as Perceived by Regular Classroom Teachers

	Number of Teachers 1989	Percent Seeing Improvement	Number of Teachers 1990	Percent Seeing Improvement
RRT	279	69	277	80
LEP	31	74	56	75
AST	239	65	429	67

Overall, attendance percentages, as perceived by school staff, increased between 1989 and 1990, especially in the RRT component where 80 percent of the regular classroom teachers saw improved student attendance as a result of their students' involvement in the reading resource component.

Conclusions

- Most schools implemented an incentive plan to encourage and improve student attendance.
- Attendance rates improved; particularly in schools with stimulating incentive programs.
- In 34 RIP schools average daily attendance fell below 89 percent in 1990.

Recommendations

- Schools showing improvement or maintaining a high rate of attendance should continue their successful incentive plans.
- Individual schools with falling attendance rates should develop more rewarding attendance strategies.
- Successful attendance plans should be shared with schools encountering attendance problems.

RECREATIONAL AND ENRICHMENT READING

Description

Research from the National Institute of Education (NIE) suggests that the amount of independent reading children do in and out of school is significantly related to gains in reading achievement and is probably a major source of vocabulary growth and reading fluency. Public and school libraries are especially important for children from poor homes. Children in classrooms with libraries read more, express better attitudes toward reading and make greater gains in reading comprehension than children who do not have such reading access to books.

Each year since 1986, all schools serving students in kindergarten through grade six have received monies through the State Initiative Reading Improvement Program. These funds are allocated to purchase recreational and enrichment reading materials to foster and help develop students' enjoyment of independent reading. Schools use these funds for reading materials to enhance individual room libraries or the school's main library.

Interest in Recreational Reading

As in previous years, conscientious RIP resource teachers presented workshops or training sessions to school staff members throughout the year. During the 1990 school year, recreational reading was presented more often than any other topic. As a result, classroom teachers, overall, increased the frequency of independent reading classes during the year. These regular classroom teachers were asked how many times a week they scheduled recreational reading. Their responses, reported in Table 28, illustrate the increase from 1989 to 1990 in the number of 30-minute sessions held each week.

Table 28

Scheduled Weekly Independent Reading Sessions

Sessions Per Week	1989		1990	
	Number of Teachers	Percent	Number of Teachers	Percent
1	114	31%	158	31%
2	128	35%	142	28%
3	67	18%	87	17%
4	27	8%	49	10%
5	27	8%	75	14%
Total	361	100%	511	100%

Regular classroom teachers' assessments of students who read for fun and enjoyment remained high in the 1989 and 1990 school years. Ninety-five percent of the teachers indicated their students were either very interested or moderately interested in the periods set aside for recreational reading. Teachers were also asked to rate the improvement of their students' interest in independent reading resulting from their participation in a RIP component. The results are reported in Table 29.

Table 29

**Improved Student Interest in Recreational Reading
by Program Component--as Perceived by
Regular Classroom Teachers**

Component	1989		1990	
	n	%	n	%
RRT	294	89	339	81
LEP	33	91	56	91
AST	250	54	435	75

The positive impact of RIP on reading for enjoyment is reflected in comments and ratings of the regular classroom teachers. While the ratings were lower in the 1990 school year for the RRT component, the LEP component remained consistent and the AST rating increased by 21 percent.

Surveyed parents of RIP students were asked how many times they had taken their children to the library and how often their children read library books. The number of visits to the public library decreased from 1989 to 1990, but the number of books read at home remained the same. In both years, two-thirds of the parents indicated their children read three or more books at home during the year.

Conclusions

- Recreational reading was the main topic presented more often than others to regular classroom teachers by the RIP resource teachers.
- Teachers were more aware of the benefits of recreational reading as indicated by an increase in the scheduled number of independent reading sessions per week between 1989 and 1990.
- Regular classroom teachers indicated their students' interest in recreational reading had improved in the last two years.

Recommendations

- RIP budget allocations for recreational reading materials for room and school libraries should continue.
- Citywide inservice meetings for RIP resource staff should continue to place emphasis on recreational reading with innovative ideas and new library materials to sustain and promote the current interest in reading for enjoyment.
- Parent activities should include the education of parents on the importance of encouraging and supporting their children to read at home.